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Oppression amidst Socio-political Tapestry of Azucena Grajo Uranza's "Bamboo in the Wind"

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Abstract— *Literature as a form of art captures life in all its varied forms and shapes. It reflects society and serves as a corrective mirror where people can look at themselves and find a reason to initiate a positive change. This study aims to thresh out the preponderance of oppression as a theme in the various facets of the novel through exposition of excerpts and surface out the corrective change manifested by the characters as written. The novel of Azucena Grajo Uranza entitled "Bamboo in the Wind" depicting a socio-political story anchored in Philippine history during the Marcosian era, was analyzed using the sociological and philosophical approach to literary criticism. Findings show that different forms of oppression were experienced by the characters in the novel. These include exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and violence. These realities happened amidst the backdrop of martial law in the Marcosian era. The author was able to emulate the transformation of human consciousness of character and made apparent two significant learnings in man's experience, that of human dignification and being a man for others. The novel captures socio-political accounts that give life to history and is indeed a national treasure where Filipinos in contemporary times and people of various cultures may derive insights for human transformational learning.*

Keywords—human transformation, literary analysis, Marcosian era, oppression, socio-political novel.

I. INTRODUCTION

Life in all its varied forms and shapes is captured through literature. As a mirror of life and society, literature represents life; such that the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual can become objects of literary imitation [1]. Human actions including what people think, say or do in the society are imitated through literature. Characters portraying human lives and actions in stories with the aim of educating, informing and entertaining, including attitudes, morals and values of the society are found in literature. By transforming real life events of the society into fiction where readers can look into their inner selves is the primary goal of writers of literature. Through reflection, readers would realize the need to make the necessary change, a sort of mental and emotional training set that sensitizes the readers' mind to formulate a corrective action. Thus, literature is not only a reflection of society but also serves as the corrective mirror in which members of the society can look at themselves and find a reason for positive change [2].

A novel is one of the many forms of prose narrative that captures historical events and happenings mirrored in literature. It has emerged as a powerful medium to present the age in a descriptive and analytical manner as it can represent the social, political, cultural and historical growth of society at a great length [3]. Two elements play an important role in the development of the novel, history and politics. The ordinary functioning of man's routine life that is affected by political upheavals can be placed on a "spotlight" in the novel. The socio-political stagnation of the country that is shaken by most volatile and violent spectrum of the contemporary history can be captured by writers in a novel.

An English critic and essay writer William Hazlitt once stated that a novel is a story written about man and his habit; the modes of man based on approximate criticism; and by any means that reflect society [4]. Dr. Timothy Spurgin, Professor of English Literature at Lawrence University [5] also stated that a great novel oftentimes describes an entire society, creating a vivid image of the relationships among whole classes of people, and thus, providing bases why novels are frequently described as forerunners of modern ethnographies and social histories.

A novel has a defining feature that makes it distinct to other forms of prose narratives. It pays close attention to the relationship between society and the self or the individual. Novelist Jane Smiley puts it well when she describes novel as being "first and foremost about how individuals fit, or don't fit, into their social worlds" [6].

According to Chikara (2010) [7], a novel differs from a romance through its treatment of life and manners; and differs from history through its fictional nature, geared towards showcasing the qualities of literature and as an art. A novel can deal with history as it is written, to present factual events that transpired in the past, geared towards promoting a public discussion regarding historical responsibilities [8]. Novel differs from history through its timeless value in the hands of readers that consider it as a work of art. The two important features

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of a work of art considered to be of literary value would include possession of eternal qualities and depths of meaning as interpreted by critics.

Henry James, the nineteenth century novelist applied the technique point- of-view narration in his writings [9]. The minds of his characters were established to serve as focal interest in his novel. There is also limitation in the readers' knowledge of events and characters in his works. Henry James treats his novel "The Art of Fiction" directly related to life itself [9]. Thus, his thoughts of "novel as history" emphasized that like historians, readers can look at the truthfulness in the novel, hand in hand with life itself. Henry James further claims that, "A novel is a personal impression of life; that to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression…The form it seems…; is to be appreciated after the fact; when the author's choice has been made, his standards has been indicated; then one can follow lines and directions and compare tones" [9].

James' example had been followed by writers where they experimented shifting of focus on the novel by examining inward human consciousness like Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and William Faulkner. Stream of consciousness, a kind of narration was employed by these writers to establish the flow of consciousness. While the novel continues to become popular in the present time, its focus has shifted from a realistic perspective to the more expansive form incorporating different fictional modes. Science fiction, social and historical novel are the three types of fictional mode that emerged with the objectives "to be didactic, to instruct readers in the necessity for changing their morality, their lives, and the institutions of society" [10].

Filipino novels in English are not exempted from this literary trend. In fact, it was at the time in the Philippine history when socio-political oppressions brought so much human suffering that some of these novels were born from the creative spirit of Filipino writers like Azucena Grajo Uranza who wrote the novel "Bamboo in the Wind" to convey her aspirations for a better way of life. In Young's (1992) [11] article the word "oppression," refers to conditions in distant places and times: it is what brutal dictators and totalitarian governments do to their subjects or to the people they have conquered. Oppressive conditions exist in liberal and democratic societies, not necessarily as part of intended policies or practices, but as something that has been woven into the fabric of major economic, political and cultural institutions.

In the Philippines, it was during the Marcosian era where most widespread oppressions and engagement of the national consciousness were manifested and further evoked the deepest impression that triggered the fruition of creative works in a way as a realistic documentation of human experience which would have been lost by the factual narration of history. It is in the novel "Bamboo in the Wind" of Azucena Grajo Uranza [12] that the study aimed to determine the varied socio-political oppressions experienced by Filipino characters; to recount the forms of experienced oppressions; and identify the human transformation evolved out of these socio-political oppressions against the backdrop of the Marcosian era.

II. METHODOLOGY

The primary source of the study is the full-length novel of Azucena Grajo Uranza's "Bamboo in the Wind" [12]. The novel was analyzed using the sociological and philosophical approach to literary criticism. Sociological approach to criticism starts with a conviction that art's relation to society is vitally important, and that the investigation of this relationship may organize and deepen one's aesthetic response to a work of art [13]. In this approach, a critic according to Gioia (1976) [14] examines literature in the cultural, economic, and political context in which it is written, including the prevailing system of government in the literary work, the rights of individuals as depicted in the characters, how wealth is distributed, and who holds the power. The literary work is described and dissected in terms of the presence of sociological elements in its various parts, presenting them as excerpts with corresponding evidence and argumentations. For philosophical approach, the moral or humanistic analysis is followed where the nature of man is made central to literature. This approach requires the literary work to present man as essentially rational, endowed with intellect and free will, and should not misrepresent his true nature as a human being. Critics taking a moral or philosophical approach usually describe or evaluate a literary work in terms of the ideas and values it contains, and this often means examining the literary work's ideas and values, both those expressed directly by the narrator or character and those implied by the overall design and content in relation to a particular ethical, philosophical, or religious system like rationalism, existentialism, Christianity and others [15].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Historical and conceptual background

People in a society may experience oppression in the form of exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and violence. These conditions could be foundational elements or outcomes of the social and economic structures of a society. In the Philippines, sometime in 1972 months prior to the declaration of martial law by the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos, Uranza portrayed varied forms of oppressions experienced by Filipinos through the characters in her novel "Bamboo in the

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Wind". Oppression as defined by Barker (2003) [16] refers to the social act of placing severe restrictions to an individual, group or institution where typically a government or political organization that is in power, installs restrictions formally or covertly on people individually or in group in a way that they become exploited and less able to compete with other social groups. The oppressed individual or group is devalued, exploited and deprived of privileges by the individual or group who is in power. This occurs when individuals are systematically subjected to political, economic, cultural, or social degradation because of their affiliation to a social group, this resulting from structures of domination and subordination and correspondingly, ideologies of superiority and inferiority [17]. The concept of oppression as explained by Johnson (2000) [18] refers to social forces that tend to put pressure upon people and hold them down or hem them in and block their pursuits of a good life; just as privilege opens doors of opportunity to people, oppression closes them down.

3.2 Analysis of the Novel

In the novel, oppression is depicted in the incident where Lorenzo "Larry" Esteva, Jr., the protagonist in the story, a Filipino balikbayan from the United States and a lawyer by profession, a son of a prominent and wealthy businessman, a scion of the upper class who is deeply and socially involved, and torn between conscience and blood [19] is requested by Ramon, his best friend since grade school, son of a judge and also a lawyer to go to Bacolod, a city in Negros island, Western Philippines to help his farmer friends' problem in his stead. Larry met Mamerto Lozada, the leader of the farmers group in Bacolod. Larry observed:

"the cluster of run–down shack housing of the migrant laborers who came every season to cut and load the cane into trucks ready for the long haul to the mills" (p204).

Mamerto explained that the month of September is termed by all farmers in Bacolod as:

'tiempo-muerte" a dead season over the land, which means that there will be no planting or harvesting at this time since it is an –in between season, a time for tightening belts", (p204).

The partly-harvested cane fields which Larry saw will only be harvested if the rich land owner, Vizcarra will answer for the disappearance and death of the farmers' relatives who make complaints and questions on their wages. Though the law provides that the legal minimum wage for agricultural workers is eight pesos a day, Mamerto explained to Larry that as per agreement of the farmers with the owner, payment would be…

"Seven pesos for the seasoned workers and five for the new ones, a day" (p205).

One practice of the laborers in the cane fields is to line up every Wednesday for their midweek "sacada", a salary advance charged against the laborers' weekly wages as this means life and death for them, for without it, there will be no food for the family for the rest of the week. When Saturday came for the distribution of the wages, the laborers discovered that,

"… they have been charged twenty percent interest for the salary advance of Thursday, and they were told that, henceforth, there would be a one peso charged for every five pesos of the 'sacada' they made at midweek" (p 206).

Because of this, the laborers complained which prompted the owner Vizcarra to call his private armies to disperse them and abduct Rufino Mahilom and his son Manuel. The farmers declared a strike against Vizcarra, the rich landowner, as a sort of protest, but the latter called again his private army and fired shots killing two of the protesters. Later the farmers learned that Manuel was tortured and killed:

"The bones on his face had been smashed, both eyes had been gorged out, his body was covered with burns, both his arms and legs were broken, and a long sharp stick had been inserted into his p…." (p207).

The laborers sought help to the Provincial Fiscal's office but were just told that they had no witnesses and those who fired shots could not be found. Furthermore, Vizcarra denied the allegations.

Exploitation is the form of oppression experienced by the farmers in Bacolod. Its manifestation in such a location can be gleaned from the gap between the rich owner and the masses of working people. According to Tilly (1998) [20], exploitation is carried out by the powerful and well-connected people who deploy resources and from which they draw significantly increased returns by coordinating the effort of outsiders, whom they exclude from the full value added by that effort. Exploitation in real life is manifested by seven elements: power holders, their coordinated efforts, deployable resources, command over those resources, returns from those resources, categorical exclusion, and skewed division of returns as compared with effort. Exploitation creates unjust power relations when workers' energies and capacities are controlled by and appropriated for the benefit of other people – in most cases, a few 'haves' who maintain and increase their power, wealth and status at the expense of the many 'have-nots.' This is one way that people experience oppression [21].

In the novel, the plight of the farmers in Bacolod depicts the realities of exploitation of the poor and vulnerable people. As they do not have the knowledge and education to understand their rights and pertinent laws on wages, the rich, educated and powerful land owner can do whatever he wishes as these poor people are under his mercy and

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he has all the connections in the government and the private sector. Furthermore, the poor are also weak. They do not have the resources and could not defend their rights as they lack "connections" or people of influence to support their cause. They are dependent to the landowner and are mostly ignorant, hence their vulnerability to exploitation.

Marginalization as a form of oppression is likewise experienced by the characters in the novel of Uranza. It is defined as a complex process of relegating specific groups of people to the lower or outer edge of society and effectively pushes them to the lower edges of society economically, politically, culturally and socially following a policy of exclusion. Marginalization denies a sector of the society equal access to productive resources and avenues for the realization of their productive human potential and opportunities for full utilization of their capacity, and pushes the same community to poverty, misery, low wage, discrimination and uncertainty of livelihood. Consequential to this economic, political and cultural deprivation, a vast chunk of the population emerged to be socially ignorant, illiterate, uneducated and dependent [22]. Young (1992) [8] in her study of justice stated that marginals are people that the system of labor cannot or will not use and as a result, they are excluded from one of society's major integrating activities, thereby missing out on one of the basic factors leading to full inclusion. Being marginalized means more than having low income; it also includes the lack of capacity to participate or gain full respect in society. Further, she explained that those who lack employment, especially over the long-term, are at risk not only of being poor but also of lacking the respect of their neighbors and communities because, in market-driven societies, work even more than income is the sign of full participation.

In the novel, marginalization is best depicted by people living in the community of Sapang Bato. It is a community of fisherfolk and urban workers where people live in squalor and need. This place is full of urban wastes. It was here in Sapang Bato where the couple Fortunato Dimagiba, son of a farmer in Kawilihan lived with his wife Salvacion. They decided to live in Manila to try their luck.

"In Sapang Bato, Fortunato worked intermittently as pier hand when he could, or as a boat boy… but he knew nothing of the sea, so he hired himself on the streets of Divisoria, the city's biggest wholesale market, pushing a handcart loaded with textile or soap, or sometimes abattoir refuse" (p13).

His earning was not enough to feed his family as they also rented a small room about four-meter square. Since Salvacion is not used in living to some cramped quarters, she stayed most of the day outside and sold rice cakes on the sidewalk. Meanwhile the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) sent a letter to Mang Cecilio Borja, the Barrio Captain in Sapang Bato which states that:

"The Department of Social Welfare had taken notice of the squalid conditions in Sapang Bato, its lack of water and waste disposal facilities that makes the community a breeding place of disease and a source of epidemics" (p16).

As a consequence, the government began ejecting the residents which resulted to varied reactions of anger, despair and resentment among them. Mang Cecilio tried to pacify them and understands that there are avenues of government which they can use but no one in Sapang Bato has the knowledge on how they may utilize these avenues.

"Besides" added Mang Cecilio, "thank God, the wheels of government grind slow. So, perhaps, there was no necessity for them to face the problem immediately. Perhaps the government might even forget it" (p17).

In the novel, the poor and uneducated are also marginalized. They have difficulty of getting a decent job. Most of them have substandard ways of living in terms of shelter, food and education. They are often neglected by the government and deprive of the opportunity of a decent life and respect of the society. Being poor is tantamount to being isolated from the rest of the society and not deserving of any attention and support from the government.

The third form of oppression is powerlessness which refers to the inability of an oppressed group to make decisions about their own lives. It is the State that makes decisions daily for its citizens, removing them from the decision-making process, and rendering them powerless [11]. Individuals with oppressed backgrounds experience powerlessness. He further noted that the powerless are those who lack authority or power… those whom power is exercised without their exercising it; the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them." The idea of powerlessness can be linked to Marx's theory of socialism: some people "have" power while others "have-not" and the powerless are dominated by the ruling class and are situated to take orders and rarely have the right to give them [23].

Powerlessness is associated with some fundamental injustices such as inhibition to develop one's capacities, lack of decision-making power, and exposure to disrespectful treatment because of the lowered status. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educational philosopher defined powerlessness as the strongest form of oppression because it allows people to be oppressed themselves and others. The culture of silence is an example of powerlessness where the oppressed people become so powerless that they do not even talk about their

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oppression. Freire (1921) [24] stated that if they reach this stage of oppression, it creates a culture wherein it is forbidden to even mention the injustices that are being committed as the oppressed are silenced and have no voice and no will.

Uranza's characters in the novel captured powerlessness as a form of oppression. This was the time when the (former) President of the Republic (of the Philippines) was preparing to declare Martial Law. In the novel, a meeting was held at the house of Senator Mariano Valdellon with Congressman Pedro Mateo Johnny Villaflor, the hard-hitting news commentator and Tony Sandico, publisher and editor of the influential magazine, Justice Luna and other prominent men. Congressman Mateo asked Justice Luna what Martial Law entails:

"…well, martial law, simply put, is basically the supremacy of military authority over civilian authority" (p159).

"We can make representation in court and challenge the President's acts. We can represent those he will arrest and jail. We can fight legal battles as long as we can. But in the end, we can only hope for justice from those who sit in judgment and pray for the mercy of God" (p160).

"Martial Law" was a dreaded term that people dared not say aloud. It was a name they had given to the oppressive times they said would befall the country in the near future" (p230).

During this time, there will be big mass actions participated by students, student organizations, transport groups, religious groups, children and people in the community who will march to Malacanang (the President's Abode) to protest and take their case to the President. There will be varied issues and concerns raised such as the lowering of students' tuition fees, raising the wages of the workers, justice, freedom, and equal opportunity. In the heart of Ramon who also joined the protest he knew that:

"…the president would never negotiate with the marchers. He was too arrogant in his power and too secure in his position to pay attention to any protest from the people" (p173).

This was well exemplified when the (former) President of the Republic (of the Philippines) declared Martial law through Presidential Proclamation No. 1081. A group of soldiers surrounded the building where Larry and his father Don Lorenzo had an office. They were given a notice that their office will be closed and that all vehicles will not be permitted to leave in the name of national security. Larry's father Don Lorenzo was surprised and said:

"Let's go Larry," as he hurriedly picks up his attache case, "I think the president has declared Martial Law" (p262).

The military made massive arrest of the opposition, media men, labor leaders, senators, congressmen. They also arrested professors in the university. Rochie, the daughter of Emily Azada, a friend of Professor Merino who was arrested by the military, called her mom as she was worried about the condition of the country. Rochie was a student in the US at that time.

"… and they have arrested Senator Valdellon, and a lot of the political opposition, and the publishers and the media men, and hundreds of students. They haven't spared even the priests…" (p272).

Her mother replied that;

"Please, please, Rochie, please stop. Someone might be listening on the line. We'll try and get in touch with you as soon as it is safe" (p272).

Emily in her reflection stated that;

"… the people would have to delve into the nation's memory for the old and trusted ways of dealing with this kind of oppression which the country had time and again been subjected to… the nation was faced once again with the problem of survival, bare and absolute. There were widespread rumors about arrest of certain opposition. They had heard the toll among the students was particularly high, and she feared that no adequate records were being kept of the arrests, so that many of the youngsters would eventually be lost and would never be accounted for" (p272).

These characters in the novel depicted powerlessness. They felt helpless and could not do anything to express their grievance. The person whom they are addressing their concerns was insensitive and has shown no empathy. Those who experience this form of oppression tend to be silent and bear the sufferings as they are afraid and full of fear to tell their plight. Not even the politicians, who occupied high positions in the government was spared of being arrested. No one can fight a dictator. All of them are powerless. In the reflection of Senator De Chavez, father-in-law of Larry, he said:

"In a matter of hours, the entire face of the nation had changed, and at the instance of only one man. He was suddenly appalled by the sweep and power that lay dormant in a few lines of the Constitution, waiting only to be awakened by the clever touch of an unscrupulous hand. He has an old hand at politics and could foresee with unerring vision the next steps in this long and perilous journey toward authoritarianism: dissolution of Congress, dismantling private business empires, expansion of the army, a stranglehold on the press and the Judiciary – all steps that would consolidate total power in one man" (p281).

In the Philippine history, there was a period that Martial law was declared by the former President Ferdinand E. Marcos on Sept 21, 1972 as a disguise to mask "his

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immense greed for power and wealth" [25] and perpetuate himself to power [28]. Martial law is the exercise of government and control by the military authorities over the civilian population of a designated territory. It is an extreme measure used to control social unrest or chaos [27]. Under the president's command, the military arrested opposition figures, including Benigno Aquino, journalists, student and labor activists, and criminal elements. A total of about 30,000 detainees were kept at military compounds run by the army and the Philippine Constabulary.

Violence as a form of oppression was also experienced by the characters in Uranza's novel. According to Young (2012) [28], human society is particularly prone to violence – against women, children, and even political opponents. The term refers to the systematic violence directed to people as being members of some group. Group violence approaches legitimacy in the sense that it is tolerated. This is according to the prevailing social logic, wherein some circumstances make such form of violence more 'called for' than others. Furthermore, violence is probably the most obvious and visible form of oppression. Members of some groups live with the knowledge that they must fear random, unprovoked attacks on their persons or property. These attacks do not necessarily need a motive but are intended to damage, humiliate, or destroy the person [29]. Krug et al. (2002) [30] on the other hand, defined violence as the intentional use of physical force or "power", threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal development, or deprivation. They however acknowledged that the inclusion of the word "power" in their definition expands the conventional meaning of violence.

In the novel, violence is depicted through the demolition of the shanties of the residents in Sapang Bato. The government ordered the demolition. Soldiers with rifles in hand are there to facilitate the moving out of the people from the place. There were bulldozers that started destroying the houses. People were screaming because of panic, others were weeping and running back and forth for their safety. Paula one of the residents tried to fight back her hand brandishing the bolo but a soldier aimed his gun and fired at her.

"Without a sound, Paula twisted in the air like a ballet dancer executing a difficult turn, and then, in one swift moment, her body went limp and splashed into the sea" (p219).

Aside from Paula, his son Albert was also shot as well as Andy, son of Senator de Chavez who tried to stop the demolition at Sapang Bato. It was Senator Valdellon who exposed the brutality committed by the military in Sapang Bato.

Another incident that depicted violence in the novel is the scenario when thousands of demonstrators that passed by Mendiola bridge going to Malacanang were killed by the military. There was a point in time in the Philippine history during Martial Law that student demonstrators in Mendiola had an encounter with the military where many students were killed and injured.

During the battle of Mendiola on January 30, 1970, students and other radical protesters fought military and police forces for hours on the bridge separating the area surrounding the presidential palace from the heart of the downtown where the battle continued to rage throughout the night. Since then, the "Battle of Mendiola" had left something of an indelible mark as a special spot in this urban landscape as evidenced by the countless protest actions that occurred on this site over the years [31]. The armed soldiers were always there waiting for the protestors. A cordon was also placed as a barrier for the demonstrators not to go beyond. But as the demonstrators pushed each other, they broke the army cordon and with that, violence is escalated.

"As Ramon stood horrified, watching the rush of people pouring over the bridge, burst of gunfire erupted suddenly from different directions" (p180).

"At the first burst, a number of those who had breached the bridge flew off their feet and were spun around, hitting the pavement with a thud. A second burst. More people fell to the pavement, and those who could scamper away found their feet and rushed back across the bridge in retreat. The dead lay in pools of red along the short wide avenue as the government forces continued to fire into the crowd. The boys from Pook Esperanza had been hemmed in by the push of the mass that was eager to go over the bridge. Eddie was one of the first over the bridge and one of the first to fall. And his body, dead with the first shot, still continued to twitch as bullet after bullet hit him, his blood staining the shoes that Andy had given him" (p181).

The soldiers who fired shots to the demonstrators were armed with superior weapons. It was Lt. Magtibay, a military officer, who was the one in-charge to watch his soldiers. At the height of the stampede, demonstrators were scattered, and they ran in different directions being pursued by the military. Among them was Ligaya, the sister of Ramon, who ran into a closed church to seek refuge where she was raped by the soldier who caught her.

"The soldier, however, was too fast for her who had exhausted her strength not only in the flight but also in the panic that now dominated her. In a flash, she was in his embrace…At first, Ligaya thought that she was going

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to be handcuffed and hauled off to the police precinct. But at once she realized what the soldier was really up to. Rough hands began to fondle her breast and Ligaya screamed, her voice reverberating back and forth against the metal and concrete of the building. The soldier clamped a hand over her mouth to stifle her cry and with his other hand lifted her bodily and carried her struggling into the confessional box" (p185).

Minda, friend of Larry and Ramon who was picked up by the military was tortured and killed for being suspected as leftist.

"Minda was hanging from the shower. A stout electric cord was tied around her neck. Her head hung limply to one side, her body supine, her arms dangling at her sides. Her legs showed below her short hospital gown, black with bruises, and the tips of her toes were covered with blood clots where her toe nails had been pulled out" (p296).

Thus, violence was vividly pictured in the novel. The attacks to the helpless victims were intended to show that harm could befall to whoever would defy the dictator. No amount of justice would be accorded to the victims as the supposed defenders of the people, the military were the perpetrators of violence themselves. They were the same people who brought much sufferings to the people whom they ought to serve. In the novel, the demonstrators were depicted as killed by the military. Considering the circumstance of their presence, they were there supposedly to air their problems and grievances. The protesters comprised of students, student organizations, jeepney drivers, women sectors, farmers, labor groups, religious groups, and children. The military did not heed the call of the people – that there was something wrong with the society they lived in. Instead, the military committed abuses and atrocities against them including rape and torture.

The varied forms of oppressions as depicted in the novel "Bamboo in the Wind" by Uranza, while bringing about sufferings to the people was illustrated as a driving force to evolve a change among its characters. Thus, the philosophical dimension would reveal the emergence of human transformations of the characters arising from their experiences during the Marcos era. Transformations as defined by Miller et al., (2001) [32] refer to behavioral changes reflecting shifts in the lived values of individuals as they experienced life-changing transformations that may have relevance for societal change and that these experienced events are characterized by profound insights that trigger sustained changes in the awareness of self in relation to the world, a shift in personal values, and, consequently, of behavior. Transformation is equated with maturation and with a process of reflection and internalization, a process of development that results in a significant progressive shift in lived values essential to support the sustainable development of humanity on Earth [33]. In transformation, Jaspers (2012) [34] stated that the essential is not the work or its content but a living reality that was the beginning of a human transformation in the world and in order to understand this, one must experience some sort of transformation, rebirth, a new awareness of reality and illumination. The human transformations include the evolvement of the philosophical constructs of human dignification and that of being a man for others.

Among the characters in the novel, it was Larry Esteva who epitomizes human transformation through human dignification and becoming a man for others. Larry being the son of one of the rich land owner could no longer wish for anything as he was full in terms of material wealth. He had the best education and he was well-travelled. He married the daughter of one of the richest and most influential person in La Guardia, in the person of Senator De Chavez. Instead of enjoying his life as an affluent man, he devoted his time helping his friend Ramon looked into the problems of the farmers in Bacolod making representations of them against the unscrupulous Vizcarra and also provided assistance to the poor, the needy, and displaced residents (farmers) of La Guardia who were affected by the burning of the rice fields. When his father Don Lorenzo accused Larry of jeopardizing their family interests by helping them, Larry answered:

"I thought that we had a basic moral obligations to people whose families have been working for us not only for years, but for generations!" (p298).. "But should I be stopped by family interest and status from helping fellow human beings?" (p300).

..."You have always been kind to the tenants," Larry continued, caring and fair"... "You have taught me to be kind to them, too, but don't you see, Papa? I must now go beyond mere kindness and give them justice" (p300).

Dignity was given back to the poor farmers by Larry. He gave justice to the oppressed. In the case of their own tenants they would be provided what would be due to them. Larry's realization was that it would not be enough that he was taught kindness by his parents towards the poor, but he had to go beyond what was expected of him. He had to do what was right and just. He was no longer thinking of his own personal interest but more on the alleviation of poverty of others.

IV. CONCLUSION

Different forms of oppressions were experienced by the characters in the novel studied. These include exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and violence. These realities happened against the backdrop

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of Martial Law in the Marcos era. The author Azucena Grajo Uranza was able to emulate the transformation of human consciousness of character and made apparent two significant learnings in man's experience that of human dignification and being a man for others.

Philippine Literature is a rich repository of materials that capture the Filipino consciousness as he traverses through time. The novel "Bamboo in the Wind" presented some realistic historical scenes that would have been lost in historical accounts. History as written, can tell the story of events in human experience without going deeper into the psyche and experience of individual personalities. The novel brings life to history and makes the reader experience the events in history with "color" as dramatized by the characters. This novel captures socio-political accounts that give life to history and is indeed a national treasure where Filipinos in contemporary times and people of various cultures may derive insights for human transformational learning.

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